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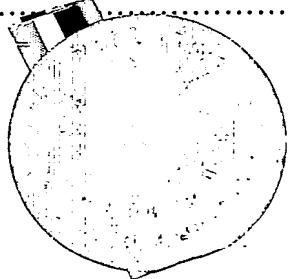
N. PCT/IT03/00771 del 25.11.2003.



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17 DEC 2004

Roma, li.....



IL FUNZIONARIO
Ing. Giovanni de Sanctis

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REQUEST

The undersigned requests that the present international application be processed according to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

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PCT/IT 03/00771

International Application No.

25 NOV 2003

25/11/03

International Filing Date

MINISTERO DELLE ATTIVITA' PRODUTTIVE

Riunione Generale per lo sviluppo produttivo e la competitività

UFFICIO ITALIANO BREVETTI E MARCHI

Name of receiving Office and "PCT International Application"

Applicant's or agent's file reference
(if desired) (12 characters maximum) ML00H12/P-WO

Box No. I TITLE OF INVENTION

Fabrication of coating and heating transfer systems by electroforming

Box No. II APPLICANT

 This person is also inventor

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The country of the address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of residence if no State of residence is indicated below.)

Telephone No.
+39 031 867 111

Media Lario s.r.l.
23842 Bosisio Parini
IT

Facsimile No.
+39 031 867 595

Teleprinter No.

Applicant's registration No. with the Office

State (that is, country) of nationality:
ITState (that is, country) of residence:
IT

This person is applicant all designated States all designated States except the United States of America the United States of America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box

Box No. III FURTHER APPLICANT(S) AND/OR (FURTHER) INVENTOR(S)

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The country of the address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of residence if no State of residence is indicated below.)

BANHAM, Robert David
Media Lario s.r.l.
23842 Bosisio Parini
IT

This person is:

 applicant only applicant and inventor inventor only (If this check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)

Applicant's registration No. with the Office

State (that is, country) of nationality:
ITState (that is, country) of residence:
IT

This person is applicant all designated States all designated States except the United States of America the United States of America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box

 Further applicants and/or (further) inventors are indicated on a continuation sheet.

Box No. IV AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE; OR ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

The person identified below is hereby/has been appointed to act on behalf of the applicant(s) before the competent International Authorities as:

 agent common representative

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.)

TAVELLA, Massimo
Hammonds Rossotto
Piazza Castello 24
20121 Milan
IT

Telephone No.

+39 02 88 07 21

Facsimile No.

+39 02 72 00 06 89

Teleprinter No.

Agent's registration No. with the Office

Address for correspondence: Mark this check-box where no agent or common representative is/has been appointed and the space above is used instead to indicate a special address to which correspondence should be sent.

PCT/IT 03/00771

Sheet No. 2

Box No. V DESIGNATION OF STATES

Mark the applicable check-boxes below; at least one must be marked.

The following designations are hereby made under Rule 4.9(a):

Regional Patent

AP ARIPO Patent: GH Ghana, GM Gambia, KE Kenya, LS Lesotho, MW Malawi, MZ Mozambique, SD Sudan, SL Sierra Leone, SZ Swaziland, TZ United Republic of Tanzania, UG Uganda, ZM Zambia, ZW Zimbabwe, and any other State which is a Contracting State of the Harare Protocol and of the PCT (if other kind of protection or treatment desired, specify on dotted line)

EA Eurasian Patent: AM Armenia, AZ Azerbaijan, BY Belarus, KG Kyrgyzstan, KZ Kazakhstan, MD Republic of Moldova, RU Russian Federation, TJ Tajikistan, TM Turkmenistan, and any other State which is a Contracting State of the Eurasian Patent Convention and of the PCT

EP European Patent: AT Austria, BE Belgium, BG Bulgaria, CH & LI Switzerland and Liechtenstein, CY Cyprus, CZ Czech Republic, DE Germany, DK Denmark, EE Estonia, ES Spain, FI Finland, FR France, GB United Kingdom, GR Greece, HU Hungary, IE Ireland, IT Italy, LU Luxembourg, MC Monaco, NL Netherlands, PT Portugal, RO Romania, SE Sweden, SI Slovenia, SK Slovakia, TR Turkey, and any other State which is a Contracting State of the European Patent Convention and of the PCT

OA OAPI Patent: BF Burkina Faso, BJ Benin, CF Central African Republic, CG Congo, CI Côte d'Ivoire, CM Cameroon, GA Gabon, GN Guinea, GQ Equatorial Guinea, GW Guinea-Bissau, ML Mali, MR Mauritania, NE Niger, SN Senegal, TD Chad, TG Togo, and any other State which is a member State of OAPI and a Contracting State of the PCT (if other kind of protection or treatment desired, specify on dotted line)

National Patent (if other kind of protection or treatment desired, specify on dotted line):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AE United Arab Emirates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HR Croatia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OM Oman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AG Antigua and Barbuda	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HU Hungary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PG Papua New Guinea
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AL Albania	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ID Indonesia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PH Philippines
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BB Barbados	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KG Kyrgyzstan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SD Sudan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BG Bulgaria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KP Democratic People's Republic of Korea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SE Sweden
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CH & LI Switzerland and Liechtenstein	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LR Liberia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TJ Tajikistan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CN China	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LS Lesotho	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TM Turkmenistan
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CU Cuba	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LV Latvia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TT Trinidad and Tobago
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CZ Czech Republic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA Morocco	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TZ United Republic of Tanzania
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DE Germany	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MD Republic of Moldova	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UA Ukraine
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DK Denmark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MG Madagascar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UG Uganda
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DM Dominica	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MK The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> US United States of America
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EC Ecuador	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MW Malawi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VC Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FI Finland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NI Nicaragua	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ZA South Africa
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GD Grenada	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NZ New Zealand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ZW Zimbabwe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GE Georgia		
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Check-boxes below reserved for designating States which have become party to the PCT after issuance of this sheet:

BW Botswana (AP)

EG Egypt

NA Namibia

Precautionary Designation Statement: In addition to the designations made above, the applicant also makes under Rule 4.9(b) all other designations which would be permitted under the PCT except any designation(s) indicated in the Supplemental Box as being excluded from the scope of this statement. The applicant declares that those additional designations are subject to confirmation and that any designation which is not confirmed before the expiration of 15 months from the priority date is to be regarded as withdrawn by the applicant at the expiration of that time limit. (Confirmation (including fees) must reach the receiving Office within the 15-month time limit.)

PCT/IT 03/00771

Sheet No. 3...

Box No. VI PRIORITY CLAIM

The priority of the following earlier application(s) is hereby claimed:

Filing date of earlier application (day/month/year)	Number of earlier application	Where earlier application is:		
		national application: country or Member of WTO	regional application: regional Office	international application: receiving Office
item (1)				
item (2)				
item (3)				
item (4)				
item (5)				

 Further priority claims are indicated in the Supplemental Box.

The receiving Office is requested to prepare and transmit to the International Bureau a certified copy of the earlier application(s) (only if the earlier application was filed with the Office which for the purposes of this International application is the receiving Office) identified above as:

all items item (1) item (2) item (3) item (4) item (5) other, see Supplemental Box

* Where the earlier application is an ARIPO application, indicate at least one country party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property or one Member of the World Trade Organization for which that earlier application was filed (Rule 4.10(b)(1)):

Box No. VII INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

Choice of International Searching Authority (ISA) (if two or more International Searching Authorities are competent to carry out the international search, indicate the Authority chosen; the two-letter code may be used):

ISA / EPO

Request to use results of earlier search; reference to that search (if an earlier search has been carried out by or requested from the International Searching Authority):

Date (day/month/year) Number Country (or regional Office)

Box No. VIII DECLARATIONS

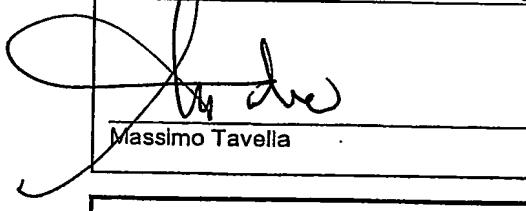
The following declarations are contained in Boxes Nos. VIII (i) to (v) (mark the applicable check-boxes below and indicate in the right column the number of each type of declaration):

Number of declarations

<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII (i)	Declaration as to the identity of the inventor	:
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII (ii)	Declaration as to the applicant's entitlement, as at the international filing date, to apply for and be granted a patent	:
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII (iii)	Declaration as to the applicant's entitlement, as at the international filing date, to claim the priority of the earlier application	:
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII (iv)	Declaration of inventorship (only for the purposes of the designation of the United States of America)	:
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII (v)	Declaration as to non-prejudicial disclosures or exceptions to lack of novelty	:

11 FEB 2004

Sheet No. 84

Box No. IX CHECK LIST; LANGUAGE OF FILING																																		
<p>This international application contains:</p> <p>(a) in paper form, the following number of sheets:</p> <table> <tr><td>request (including declaration sheets)</td><td>:</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>description (excluding sequence listings and/or tables related thereto)</td><td>:</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>claims</td><td>:</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>abstract</td><td>:</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>drawings</td><td>:</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Sub-total number of sheets</td><td>:</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>sequence listings</td><td>:</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>tables related thereto</td><td>:</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><i>(for both, actual number of sheets if filed in paper form, whether or not also filed in computer readable form; see (c) below)</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Total number of sheets</td><td>:</td><td>22</td></tr> </table> <p>(b) <input type="checkbox"/> only in computer readable form (Section 801(a)(i))</p> <p>(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings</p> <p>(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto</p> <p>(c) <input type="checkbox"/> also in computer readable form (Section 801(a)(ii))</p> <p>(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings</p> <p>(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto</p> <p>Type and number of carriers (diskette, CD-ROM, CD-R or other) on which are contained the</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto:</p> <p><i>(additional copies to be indicated under items 9(ii) and/or 10(ii), in right column)</i></p>		request (including declaration sheets)	:	5	description (excluding sequence listings and/or tables related thereto)	:	10	claims	:	3	abstract	:	1	drawings	:	3	Sub-total number of sheets	:	22	sequence listings	:		tables related thereto	:		<i>(for both, actual number of sheets if filed in paper form, whether or not also filed in computer readable form; see (c) below)</i>			Total number of sheets	:	22	<p>This international application is accompanied by the following item(s) (mark the applicable check-boxes below and indicate in right column the number of each item):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> fee calculation sheet <input type="checkbox"/> original separate power of attorney <input type="checkbox"/> original general power of attorney <input type="checkbox"/> copy of general power of attorney; reference number, if any: <input type="checkbox"/> statement explaining lack of signature <input type="checkbox"/> priority document(s) identified in Box No. VI as item(s): <input type="checkbox"/> translation of international application into (language): <input type="checkbox"/> separate indications concerning deposited microorganism or other biological material <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings in computer readable form (indicate type and number of carriers) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> copy submitted for the purposes of international search under Rule 13ter only (and not as part of the international application) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(only where check-box (b)(i) or (c)(i) is marked in left column)</i> additional copies including, where applicable, the copy for the purposes of international search under Rule 13ter <input type="checkbox"/> together with relevant statement as to the identity of the copy or copies with the sequence listings mentioned in left column <input type="checkbox"/> tables in computer readable form related to sequence listings (indicate type and number of carriers) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> copy submitted for the purposes of international search under Section 802(b-quater) only (and not as part of the international application) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(only where check-box (b)(ii) or (c)(ii) is marked in left column)</i> additional copies including, where applicable, the copy for the purposes of international search under Section 802(b-quater) <input type="checkbox"/> together with relevant statement as to the identity of the copy or copies with the tables mentioned in left column <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify): 		<p>Number of items</p> <p>:</p>
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Figure of the drawings which should accompany the abstract:	1	Language of filing of the international application:	English																															
<p>Box No. X SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p><i>Next to each signature, indicate the name of the person signing and the capacity in which the person signs (if such capacity is not obvious from reading the request).</i></p> <p></p> <p>Massimo Tavella</p>																																		

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1. Date of actual receipt of the purported international application:	25 NOV, 2003 25/11/03	
3. Corrected date of actual receipt due to later but timely received papers or drawings completing the purported international application:		
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PCT/IT 33/3077

Sheet No. 4

Box No. IX CHECK LIST; LANGUAGE OF FILING

This international application contains:		This international application is accompanied by the following item(s) (mark the applicable check-boxes below and indicate in right column the number of each item):	Number of items
(a) in paper form, the following number of sheets:			
request (including declaration sheets)	4		
description (excluding sequence listings and/or tables related thereto)	10		
claims	3		
abstract	1		
drawings	3		
Sub-total number of sheets	21		
sequence listings			
tables related thereto			
(for both, actual number of sheets if filed in paper form, whether or not also filed in computer readable form; see (c) below)			
Total number of sheets	21		
(b) <input type="checkbox"/> only in computer readable form (Section 801(a)(i))		(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings	:
(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings			
(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto			
(c) <input type="checkbox"/> also in computer readable form (Section 801(a)(ii))		(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings	:
(i) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings			
(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto			
Type and number of carriers (diskette, CD-ROM, CD-R or other) on which are contained the		(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings: <input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto:	:
<input type="checkbox"/> sequence listings:			
<input type="checkbox"/> tables related thereto:			
(additional copies to be indicated under items 9(ii) and/or 10(ii), in right column)		11. <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify):	:

Figure of the drawings which should accompany the abstract: 1 Language of filing of the international application: English

Box No. X SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE

Next to each signature, indicate the name of the person signing and the capacity in which the person signs (if such capacity is not obvious from the signature)

Massimo Tavella



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3. Corrected date of actual receipt due to later but timely received papers or drawings completing the purported international application:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> received: <input type="checkbox"/> not received:		
4. Date of timely receipt of the required corrections under PCT Article 11(2):			
5. International Searching Authority (if two or more are competent): ISA /	6. <input type="checkbox"/> Transmittal of search copy delayed until search fee is paid		

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Attorney's ref. MLOOH12/P-WO
Applicant: Media Lario s.r.l.

Fabrication of cooling and heat transfer systems by electroforming

The present invention relates to componentry for diverse forms of industry, and more particularly to the fabrication of cooling and heat transfer systems by electroforming.

There are numerous technologies involving the use of (typically metal) components that, in use, are subjected to high temperatures or find their temperatures raised, e.g. through contact with fluids that are at high temperature and/or pressure. Such components include those that are used in energy generation and heat transfer systems, and in propulsion systems. Particular examples would be reactor vessels, combustion chambers and rocket engines. There is typically a need to provide cooling of such components or to provide components in which heat is transferred from one fluid to another.

A problem with known systems is that the efficiency of such systems is not as high as it could be as the cooling or rate of heat transfer is less than desired.

A further drawback is that the conventional methods for fabrication of the components and systems are not suited to fabrication of diverse forms of componentry, with integrated cooling/heat transfer elements, and in the necessary materials, or they result in a significantly increased cost of the component for a compromise design.

There is a need for fabrication techniques that overcome the aforementioned problems and provide improved fabrication processes and components. There is furthermore a need for techniques for the fabrication of such components at reduced cost.

The present invention provides a process for the fabrication of a metallic component, comprising: providing an object having surface; performing a first electroforming operation, thereby forming a first metallic layer comprising a metallic material on said surface; forming a first mask layer on the first metallic layer, the first mask layer comprising a non-conductive material; patterning the first mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of first recesses in the first mask layer from which the non-conductive material above the first metallic layer is removed, said first recesses having a dimension of elongation; performing second electroforming operation using said metallic material whereby said first recesses are filled with said metallic material and a second metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a first predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said first mask layer.

Suitably, the object comprises a substrate and said surface comprises a flat or substantially flat surface of the substrate. Alternatively, the object comprises a shaped mandrel (which may be any shape, within reason, for example by machining), the mandrel defining (for example in negative) said surface, the surface being for example cylindrical, conical, parabolic, hyperbolic, elliptical or spherical.



Attorney's ref. MLOOH12/P-WO
Applicant: Media Lario s.r.l.

The process preferably further includes the step of: machining said second metallic layer to form a uniformly thick second metallic layer, said second metallic layer thereby having a upper surface. The process preferably further includes the step of: removing the object and removing the non-conductive material of the first mask layer, thereby producing a metallic component having first elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material has been removed.

In another aspect of the invention, the process further includes: forming a second mask layer on the upper surface of the second metallic layer, the second mask layer comprising a non-conductive material; patterning the second mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of second recesses in the second mask layer from which the non-conductive material above the second metallic layer is removed, said second recesses having a dimension of elongation; performing a third electroforming operation using said metallic material whereby said second recesses are filled with said metallic material and a third metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a second predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said mask layer.

The process preferably further includes the step of: machining said third metallic layer to form a uniformly thick third metallic layer, said third metallic layer thereby having a upper surface. The process preferably further includes the step of: removing the object and removing the non-conductive material of the first mask layer and the second mask layer, thereby producing a metallic component having first elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material of the first mask layer has been removed and having second elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material of the first mask layer has been removed.

Various patterning configurations are possible. Thus, the step of patterning the first mask layer and/or the step of patterning the second mask layer may be performed such that

- the first recesses are wider than the second recesses, or vice versa; and/or
- the first elongate channels are wider than the second first elongate channels, or vice versa; and/or
- the first elongate channels and/or the second first elongate channels taper in width or in thickness along their respective directions of elongation; and/or
- the direction of elongation of the first elongate channels is at an angle to that of the second first elongate channels, for example at right angles; and/or
- the first elongate channels and/or the second first elongate channels are provided with projections, sidewall recesses and/or baffling, whereby non-linear flows though such channels may be achieved.

In one embodiment: the steps of performing a first electroforming operation, forming a first mask layer, patterning the first mask layer, and performing second electroforming are performed such that the first metallic layer, the first mask layer and the second metallic layer extend over a predetermined first two-dimensional area; and the steps of forming a second mask layer, patterning the second mask layer and performing a third electroforming operation are performed such that the second metallic layer, the

Attorney's ref. ML00H12/P-WO
Applicant Media Lario s.r.l.

second mask layer and the third metallic layer extend over a predetermined second two-dimensional area; wherein the second two-dimensional area is larger than the first two-dimensional area.

Suitably, the first electroforming operation is performed such that the thickness of the first metallic layer is about 100 to 200 μm , although greater or lesser thicknesses are possible. Preferably, said second electroforming operation is performed such that said predetermined thickness is at least as thick as the thickness of the first metallic layer, and said machining step comprises machining the second metallic layer to a thickness equal to or about equal to the thickness of the first metallic layer.

Alternatively, said first electroforming operation is performed for an extended period, whereby the thickness of the first metallic layer is at least as large as the thickness of the first mask layer, and is for example 1-2mm or more, although greater or lesser thicknesses are possible. Alternatively or additionally, said second electroforming operation is performed for an extended period, whereby the thickness of the second metallic layer is at least as large as the thickness of the first mask layer, and is for example 1-2mm or more, although greater or lesser thicknesses are possible.

Preferably, the step of forming a first mask layer comprises coating the first metallic layer with said non-conductive material to a thickness of 1-2mm, although greater or lesser thicknesses are possible. The step of forming a second mask layer may comprise coating the second metallic layer with said non-conductive material to a thickness of 1-2mm, or to a thickness greater than the thickness of the first mask layer, although greater or lesser thicknesses are possible.

Preferably, the step of removing the object and/or removing the non-conductive material comprises dissolving said non-conductive material in a solvent or melting said object and/or non-conductive material.

In one embodiment, the object is an existing metallic component, for example made of steel, copper or bronze; and the electroformed system of channels (e.g. for cooling) remains attached to the object, thereby forming a new component.

The metallic material used in the electroforming may nickel, copper, cupronickel, nickel containing ceramic powder, or copper containing ceramic powder, or an alloy containing iron and/or cobalt. Typically, nickel is used where the strength of the final component is a priority; and copper is used where it is important for the component to have good thermal conductivity.

In embodiments, the metallic material used in the second electroforming operation is different to the metallic material used in the first electroforming operation, and/or the metallic material used in the third electroforming operation is different to the metallic material used in the second electroforming operation.

Attorney's ref. ML00H12/P-WO
Applicant: Media Lario s.r.l.

Preferably, the non-conductive material used in the steps of forming a first mask layer and/or forming a second mask layer comprises a low melting point polymer, for example poly(methylmethacrylate) (PMMA) or microcrystalline wax.

In another aspect of the invention there is provided a metallic component obtainable by the method of any of the appended claims 1 to 20.

An advantage of the invention, or embodiments thereof, is that it is suitable for fabrication of a wide range of components, and has the particular benefit of providing integral cooling/heat transfer systems. For example, it is possible to produce metallic objects having cooling channels integrally formed in the production process by electroforming. It is possible to produce thin-walled components (e.g. X-ray or high energy UV mirrors or telescopes) having internal cooling ducts without compromising the external dimensions or the surface finish, and to produce thick-walled sections (e.g. combustion chambers, reactors, rocket engines) having fine tubes or cooling channels incorporated within them, without significantly compromising structural integrity.

A further advantage is that components and systems with increased cooling/heat transfer efficiency may be fabricated, and on a variety of scales (dimensions) of component.

A further advantage is that components and systems fabricated in accordance with the invention, or embodiments thereof, are capable of producing heat flow pattern(s) of a complexity that cannot be achieved by conventional methods. The use of extremely small tube (cooling/heat transfer channel) dimensions, and wall thicknesses between the tubes, is possible; these may be for example of the order of μm . Further, the use of multiple layers of fine tubes (channels) advantageously gives a much larger surface contact area than one large tube; important for rates of cooling/heat transfer. In addition, in accordance with certain embodiments, the tube (channel) geometry may be varied over the length thereof: for example by having tapering tubes, tubes with aspect ratios that vary over the length, and tubes with restrictions, baffles, etc.

While the advantages in terms of cooling heat transfer performance have been mentioned, the invention, or embodiments thereof, permit a component to be fabricated with a system of channels such that the hollow portions reduce the overall weight of the component. Thus, the effect is to increase, compared with a solid component, the strength per unit mass of the component. This is beneficial in many applications, for example in a satellite-borne mirror that is subject, in use, to strong gravitational forces.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figures 1(a) to 1(f) show processing steps in the fabrication, in accordance with embodiments of the invention, of metallic component;

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Figure 2 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention, a first type of metallic component:

Figure 3 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention, a second type of metallic component.

Figure 4 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a third embodiment of the invention, a third type of metallic component:

Figure 5 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a fourth embodiment of the invention, a fourth type of metallic component:

Figure 6 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a fifth embodiment of the invention, a fifth type of metallic component:

Figure 7 illustrates the patterning of that may be performed on the or each of the mask layers in accordance with alternative embodiments of the invention; and

Figure 8 illustrates (a) the patterning of that may be performed on the or each of the mask layers in accordance with alternative embodiments of the invention, and (b) the effect on the channels that are produced in the component.

In the following, various embodiments will be described, applicable to the fabrication of components and systems for use in diverse industrial and engineering environments. Such applications include the following.

- (i) Precision optics where high energy levels are involved (e.g., EUV lithography, synchrotrons, solar concentrators).
- (ii) High temperature containment vessels (e.g. combustion chambers, rocket nozzles).
- (iii) High energy conductors in high temperature environments (e.g. spherical Tokomak central core).
- (iv) Micro heat exchangers.
- (v) Heat shield and temperature uniformity applications.

However, the invention is applicable to any application where it is desirable to fabricate a component (or provide an existing component with) a set of channels or ducts, or multiple (e.g. communicating) sets of channels or ducts in respective layers, for the passage of cooling or heat transfer fluid (also referred to herein as cooling or heat transfer systems).

Turning to Fig. 1, this shows processing steps in the fabrication, in accordance with embodiments of the invention, of metallic component. As indicated in Fig 1(a), an object generally designated 102. In this case the object comprises a substrate or base layer 104 formed of a metal such as aluminium or steel (or ceramic, where appropriate) coated with metal such as gold or ruthenium), having an upper surface 106. However, in certain embodiments the object may be a shaped mandrel, negative mould, or some existing mechanical component onto which further features are to be added. For example, in the fabrication of an optical telescope mirror with a concave parabolic reflecting surface, the mandrel may be shaped so as to have a convex parabolic outer surface, suitably polished, upon which one or more

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metal layers (e.g. including an initial reflective layer) are formed, including one or more layers with integral cooling/heat transfer channels as described in more detail hereinafter.

Referring to Fig. 1(b), an initial electroforming operation is performed so as to deposit a first metal layer 108 on the upper surface 106 of the substrate 104. Electroforming techniques are well known to persons skilled in the art, and the details thereof will not be repeated, for the sake of brevity. The metal of first metal layer 108 may be nickel, copper or any other metal suitable for electroforming. The duration electroforming operation depends on the thickness t_1 of the first metal layer 108 required: this may be of the order of 100-200 μm , or may be some millimetres, but may be more or less than this, depending on the particular application or component to be fabricated.

This step is followed by the formation (Fig. 1(c)) of a first mask layer 112 on the top surface 110 of the first metal layer 108. The first mask layer 112 is suitably formed by adhesion (gluing) of a polymer sheet, as is known in the art (alternatively, the first mask layer 112 may be formed by casting of a dissolved or melted material). The first mask layer 112 suitably comprises a low melting point material such as PMMA, although other materials may be used. The first mask layer 112 may be formed in a variety of thicknesses (t_2), depending on the application: it may be of the order of a millimetre or two, or for example an order of magnitude or more greater than the thickness t_1 of the first metal layer 108.

Next, the first mask layer 112 is patterned, using a precision milling or turning machine, resulting in the product shown in Fig. 1(d). Alternatively, a laser cutting machine or optical lithography process may be used. The patterning step removes, in selected areas, the material of the first mask layer 112 above the surface 110 of the first metal layer 108, generating first elongate recesses 114 (extending into the paper in Fig. 1(d)). The width w_1 of the first elongate recesses 114 is highly variable depending on the application, and may be for example 0.5 to 1.0 times the thickness t_2 of the first mask layer 112. However, the width may be (a) several hundred μm and upwards (e.g. greater than about 300 μm) by machining, (b) several tens of μm (e.g. greater than about 20 μm) by laser cutting, and (c) a few μm (e.g. greater than about 1 μm) by lithography. The upper limit on the width may be anything within reason (e.g. several mm up to several centimetres).

Thereafter, a second electroforming operation is performed. Suitably this is done using the same metal (nickel) as in the first electroforming, but the materials may be different. As illustrated in Fig. 1(e) the second electroforming is performed to an extent such that the first elongate recesses 114 are entirely filled with electroformed metal 116; and the metal overflows typically creating bulges 118 that coalesce to form a rough upper metal layer 120 having a thickness at its narrowest point that is indicated as t_3 .

Next, as illustrated in Fig. 1(f), the rough upper metal layer 120 is machined by suitable electronically controlled machine tool, to produce a flat or substantially flat upper surface 122. Thus a second metal layer 124 is produced, having a thickness t_4 , where $t_4 < t_3$. Typically, $t_4 = t_1$, although it is also possible, depending on the application, that $t_4 < t_1$ or $t_4 > t_1$. At this stage, there is a metallic structure having parallel outer layers and surfaces, adhered to a substrate 104, and having a series of first elongate

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channels 126 filled with polymer (PMMA) separated by first sidewalls 128. In this case the surfaces 130 of the sidewalls 128 are flat. The further processing of this intermediate product may take several forms.

Figure 2 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention, a first type of metallic component, generally designated 200. Here, after the process of Figs 1(a) to (f), the material of the substrate 104 and the polymer in first elongate channels 126 is removed by melting at a suitably high temperature (e.g. in an oven), or by dissolving in a suitable (e.g. organic) solvent, such as chloroform. The component 200 has parallel surfaces 122, 202, and has a series of empty first elongate channels 126 running therethrough. Where substrate is a metal substrate, typically it is removed by mechanical separation.

Although the component 200 is indicated as having a flat configuration, it will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that, depending on the shape of the object or mandrel used at the start of the process, the component may be or form part of a structure that is spherical, conical, parabolic, hyperbolic, etc.

Figure 3 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention, a second type of metallic component, generally designated 300. The process may be the same as with respect to the first embodiment, except as described below. In this case, after the point illustrated in Fig. 1(f), this step is followed by the formation of a second mask layer on the top surface 122 of the second metal layer 124. The second mask layer 112 is suitably formed by adhesion (gluing) of a polymer sheet, as is known in the art (alternatively, the first mask layer 112 may be formed by casting or melting of a dissolved material). The second mask layer 112 suitably comprises a low melting point material such as PMMA, although other materials may be used. The second mask layer 112 may be formed in a variety of thicknesses (t_5), depending on the application: it may be of the order of a millimetre or two, or for example an order of magnitude or more greater than the thickness t_1, t_4 of the first metal layer 108 or second metal layer 124, respectively.

Next, the second mask layer is patterned, using a precision milling or turning machine, resulting in a configuration similar to that shown in Fig. 1(d). Alternatively, a laser cutting machine or optical lithography process may be used. The patterning step removes, in selected areas, the material of the second mask layer above the surface 122 of the second metal layer 124, generating second elongate recesses (extending into the paper). The width w_2 of the second elongate recesses is highly variable depending on the application, and may be for example 0.5 to 1.0 times the thickness t_5 of the second mask layer 112. However, the width may be (a) several hundred μm and upwards (e.g. greater than about 300 μm) by machining, (b) several tens of μm (e.g. greater than about 20 μm) by laser cutting, and (c) a few μm (e.g. greater than about 1 μm) by lithography. The upper limit on the width may be anything within reason (e.g. several mm up to several centimetres).

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As before, the rough upper metal layer is machined by suitable electronically controlled machine tool, to produce a flat or substantially flat upper surface 302. Thus a third metal layer 304 is produced, having a thickness t_6 , where $t_6 \leq t_5$. Typically, $t_6 = t_4$, although it is also possible, depending on the application, that $t_6 < t_4$ or $t_6 > t_4$. At this stage, there is a metallic structure having parallel outer layers and surfaces, adhered to a substrate 104, and having a series of first elongate channels 126 filled with polymer (PMMA) separated by first sidewalls 128, and a series of second elongate channels 306 filled with polymer (PMMA) separated by second sidewalls 308.

There results (Fig.3) a structure, from which the object (substrate, mandrel) can be removed as before, that has (here parallel) first elongate channels 126 and second elongate channels 306 that are may be used (by passing fluid therethrough) for heat transfer/cooling of the component 300.

Figure 4 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a third embodiment of the invention, a third type of metallic component, generally designated 400. Here, the process is the same as the embodiment of Fig. 3, except that the patterning of the second mask layer is performed so that the recesses created, and therefore the resulting second elongate channels 306, extend in a direction that is transverse (at 90 degrees; although any other suitable angle may be employed) to that of the first elongate channels 126. This configuration finds particular application in heat transfer systems, e.g. as a crossflow heat exchanger: here, a hot fluid is passed through the first elongate channels 126 and a cold fluid is passed through the second elongate channels 306, in each case for example by suitable pumping or convection. In this case, the component 400 is suitably made of copper.

Figure 5 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a fourth embodiment of the invention, a fourth type of metallic component, generally designated 500. Here, the component 500 is shown in cross-section. The process is the same as is described with respect to Fig. 3, except that the first metal layer 108 and the first mask layer 112 are fabricated over a first two dimensional area (e.g. square) on the substrate 104. However, the second metal layer 124, the second mask layer (not shown) and the third metal layer 304 are fabricated over a second two-dimensional area that is greater than the first two-dimensional area. In this way, there can be provided fluid flows (indicated by arrows A, B) that overlap, and that may be transverse or extend in three dimensions.

Figure 6 illustrates the technique of fabricating, in accordance with a fifth embodiment of the invention, a fifth type of metallic component, generally designated 600. This is employed in the fabrication of a relatively thick-walled component, where high strength is required. In this case, the process is that same as described with reference to Fig. 2, except that the second electroforming operation is performed for an extended period. The result is that the thickness t_4 of the second metallic layer 124 is much greater than the thickness t_1 of the first metallic layer 108, and is for example 1-2 times the thickness t_2 of the first elongate channels 126. For example, the thickness t_4 may be anything from 1-2 mm to 1-2 cm, or more, depending on the application of the component. As will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art, the configuration may be generated in reverse; i.e., with the thickness t_1 of the first metallic layer 108 being similarly greater than the thickness t_4 of the second metallic layer

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124. Alternatively, both the first metallic layer and the second metallic layer 124 may be formed with enlarged thicknesses.

Figure 7 illustrates the patterning of that may be performed on the or each of the mask layers in accordance with alternative embodiments of the invention. As well as cutting the mask layer 114 to generate recesses 114 that are of uniform cross-sectional dimensions along their length, the recesses 114' may be cut so that their width increases or decrease along their length. Having one end 702 of the recess 114' narrower than the other 704 means that the elongate channels eventually produced can have dimensions that widen or narrow long their length. Channels that widen along their length advantageously allow fluids to expand as they flow, also enhancing cooling/heat transfer rates.

Figure 8(a) illustrates the patterning of that may be performed on the or each of the mask layers in accordance with alternative embodiments of the invention. Here, as well as producing normal recesses 114; the mask layer may be patterned (cut) on a top surface 802 to produce top recesses 804, and on side surfaces 806 to produce side recesses 808. This affects the configuration of the sidewalls (130, 308) of the elongate channels that are eventually produced. The effect is illustrated in Fig. 8(b): the sidewalls 130 have baffles 810 that produce complex fluid flows in use, as indicated by the arrows. Such complex non-linear flows can further assist in raising cooling/heat transfer efficiency.

An example of the advantageous use of the present invention is in the fabrication of optical components used in extreme ultra-violet (EUV) systems. The optical components (e.g. mirrors) used in such systems are typically housed, along with the source of EUV radiation (e.g. a plasma source), inside a vacuum chamber. An example of an EUV light source used in lithography applications generates EUV radiation at a wavelength of 13.4 nm, at a relatively high optical power of 100W or more. The plasma source typically emits energy in a range of forms/wavelengths, including those that will cause significant heating of neighbouring components such as the mirror. There is traditionally no cooling (e.g. by air convection) of the mirror; and overheating of the mirror can cause significant imperfections in the mirror surface, detrimentally affecting the performance of the system.

The fabrication techniques according to appropriate embodiments of the invention may be used to reduce or eliminate this effect. Here, a mandrel (e.g. glass), having a negative of the desired final shape of the component (e.g. elliptical, parabolic; dimensions, for example, of the order of 50mm to 200mm for lithography applications) is first coated with a material suited to reflection of EUV energy, e.g. ruthenium, by vapour deposition. Then, the remainder of the mirror is formed (e.g. in nickel) onto the ruthenium layer by the above-described techniques according to the invention, the nickel thus incorporating one or more layers of cooling channels. The mirror so formed may be one to several mm thick, for example 2mm thick. The mirror (nickel+ruthenium layers) is mechanically removed from the mandrel, and is typically ready for mounting/usage without substantial further working or processing.

In use, the mirror may be cooled by passing a cooling fluid (e.g. water) through the system of channels integrated into the mirror. Unlike other applications (e.g. rocket engines) where the operational

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temperatures may reach several thousand degrees, the mirror here may be operating at temperatures of several hundred degrees (e.g. typically 300 °C). As this temperature is not extremely high (relative to other applications), the cross-sectional dimensions of the cooling channels in the nickel layer can be correspondingly smaller; they may be in the order of μm , and for example 1-2 μm .

It will however be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the invention is applicable to the numerous industrial applications mentioned herein, as well as others not mentioned. It will further be appreciated that while certain techniques, process steps, materials and dimensions are described in relation to individual embodiments, such techniques, process steps, materials and dimensions may, as appropriate, be used in combination and/or varied to suit a particular application.

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Claims:

1. A process for the fabrication of a metallic component, comprising:
providing an object having surface;
performing a first electroforming operation, thereby forming a first metallic layer comprising a metallic material on said surface;
forming a first mask layer on the first metallic layer, the first mask layer comprising a non-conductive material;
patterning the first mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of first recesses in the first mask layer from which the non-conductive material above the first metallic layer is removed, said first recesses having a dimension of elongation;
performing second electroforming operation using said metallic material whereby said first recesses are filled with said metallic material and a second metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a first predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said first mask layer.
2. The process of claim 1, wherein the object comprises (A) a substrate and said surface comprises a flat or substantially flat surface of the substrate, or (B) a shaped mandrel, the mandrel defining (for example in negative) said surface, the surface being for example cylindrical, conical, parabolic, hyperbolic, elliptical or spherical.
3. The process of claim 1 or 2, further including:
machining said second metallic layer to form a uniformly thick second metallic layer, said second metallic layer thereby having a upper surface.
4. The process of claim 3, further including:
removing the object and removing the non-conductive material of the first mask layer, thereby producing a metallic component having first elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material has been removed.
5. The process of claim 3, further including:
forming a second mask layer on the upper surface of the second metallic layer, the second mask layer comprising a non-conductive material;
patterning the second mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of second recesses in the second mask layer from which the non-conductive material above the second metallic layer is removed, said second recesses having a dimension of elongation;
performing a third electroforming operation using said metallic material whereby said second recesses are filled with said metallic material and a third metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a second predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said mask layer.

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6. The process of claim 5, further including:

machining said third metallic layer to form a uniformly thick third metallic layer, said third metallic layer thereby having a upper surface.

7. The process of claim 6, further including:

removing the object and removing the non-conductive material of the first mask layer and the second mask layer, thereby producing a metallic component having first elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material of the first mask layer has been removed and having second elongate channels extending therein where the non-conductive material of the first mask layer has been removed.

8. The process of claim 7, wherein:

the step of patterning the first mask layer and/or the step of patterning the second mask layer are performed such that

- (a) the first recesses are wider than the second recesses, or vice versa; and/or
- (b) the first elongate channels are wider than the second first elongate channels, or vice versa; and/or
- (c) the first elongate channels and/or the second first elongate channels taper in width or in thickness along their respective directions of elongation; and/or
- (d) the direction of elongation of the first elongate channels is at an angle to that of the second first elongate channels, for example at right angles; and/or
- (e) the first elongate channels and/or the second first elongate channels are provided with projections, sidewall recesses and/or baffling, whereby non-linear flows though such channels may be achieved.

9. The process of claim 7, wherein:

the steps of performing a first electroforming operation, forming a first mask layer, patterning the first mask layer, and performing second electroforming are performed such that the first metallic layer, the first mask layer and the second metallic layer extend over a predetermined first two-dimensional area; and

the steps of forming a second mask layer, patterning the second mask layer and performing a third electroforming operation are performed such that the second metallic layer, the second mask layer and the third metallic layer extend over a predetermined second two-dimensional area; wherein the second two-dimensional area is larger than the first two-dimensional area.

10. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the first electroforming operation is performed such that the thickness of the first metallic layer is about 100 to 200 μm .

11. The process of claim 3, and any claim dependent thereon, wherein said second electroforming operation is performed such that said predetermined thickness is at least as thick as the thickness of

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the first metallic layer, and said machining step comprises machining the second metallic layer to a thickness equal to or about equal to the thickness of the first metallic layer.

12. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein said first electroforming operation is performed for an extended period, whereby the thickness of the first metallic layer is at least as large as the thickness of the first mask layer, and is for example 1-2mm or more.

13. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein said second electroforming operation is performed for an extended period, whereby the thickness of the second metallic layer is at least as large as the thickness of the first mask layer, and is for example 1-2mm or more.

14. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the step of forming a first mask layer comprises coating the first metallic layer with said non-conductive material to a thickness of 1-2mm.

15. The process of claim 5, and any claim dependent thereon, wherein the step of forming a second mask layer comprises coating the second metallic layer with said non-conductive material to a thickness of 1-2mm, or to a thickness greater than the thickness of the first mask layer.

16. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the step of removing the object and/or removing the non-conductive material comprises dissolving said non-conductive material in a solvent or melting said non-conductive material.

17. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the object is a metallic component, for example made of steel, copper or bronze.

18. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the metallic material used in the electroforming is nickel, copper, cupronickel, nickel containing ceramic powder, or copper containing ceramic powder, or an alloy containing iron and/or cobalt.

19. The process of claim 18, wherein the metallic material used in the second electroforming operation is different to the metallic material used in the first electroforming operation, and/or the metallic material used in the third electroforming operation is different to the metallic material used in the second electroforming operation.

20. The process of any of the preceding claims, wherein the non-conductive material used in the steps of forming a first mask layer and/or forming a second mask layer comprises a low melting point polymer, for example poly(methylmethacrylate) (PMMA) or microcrystalline wax.

21. A metallic component obtainable by the method of any of the preceding claims.

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Abstract

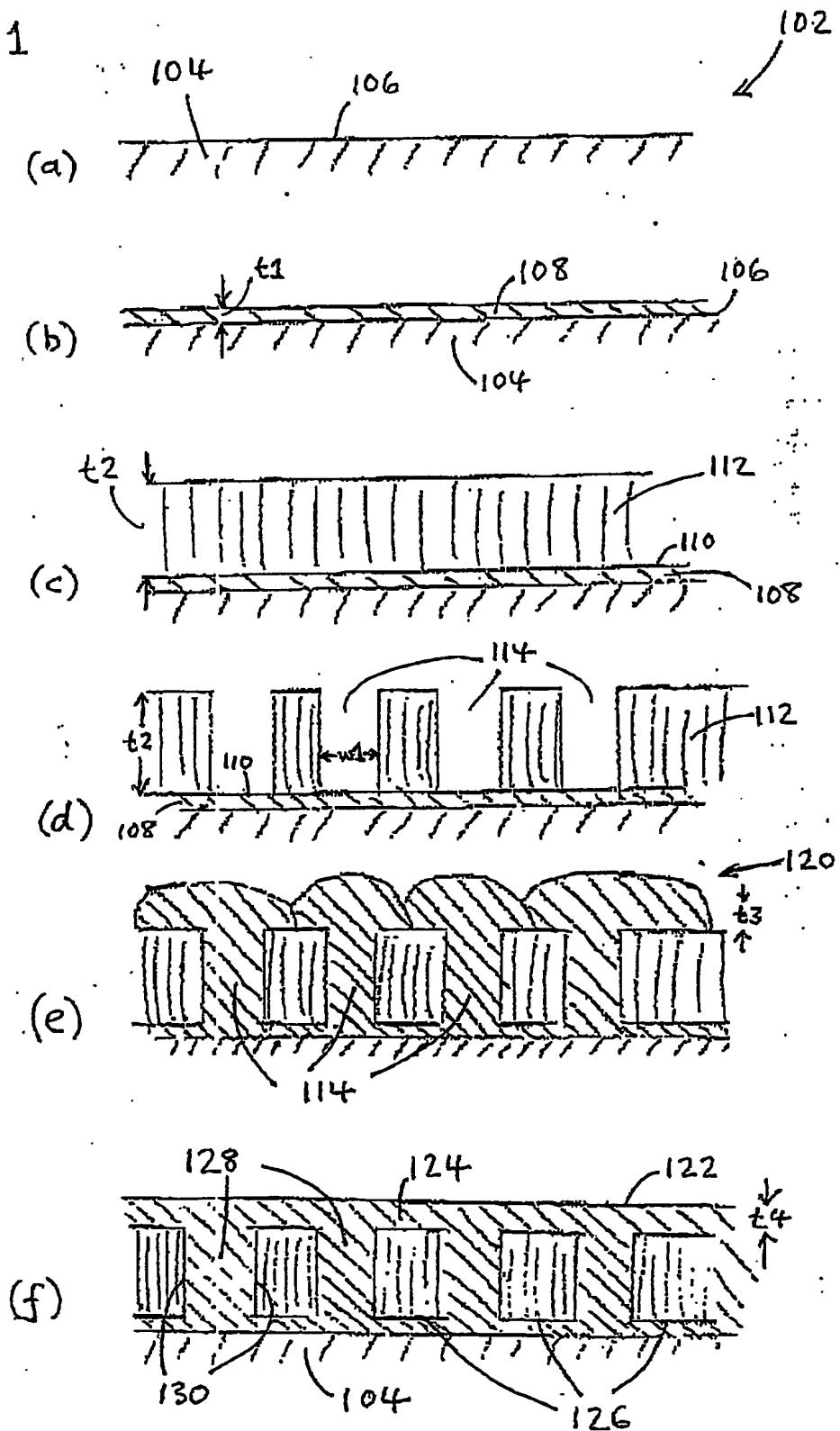
Fabrication of cooling and heat transfer systems by electroforming

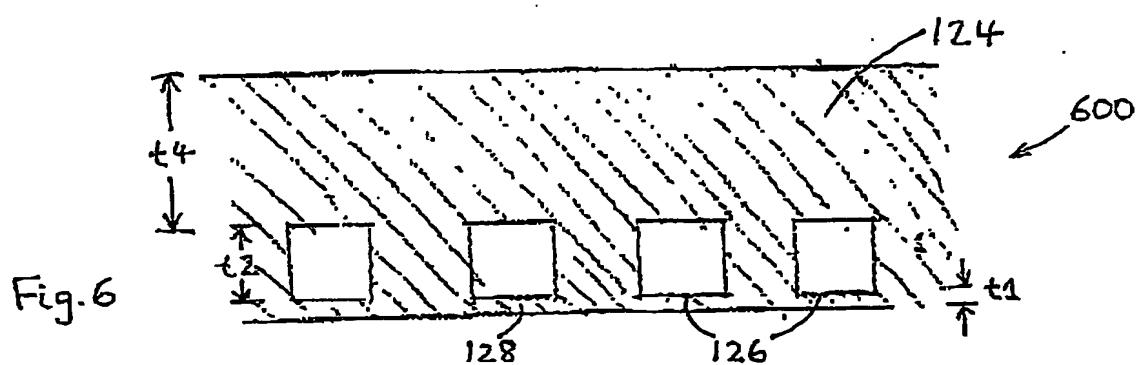
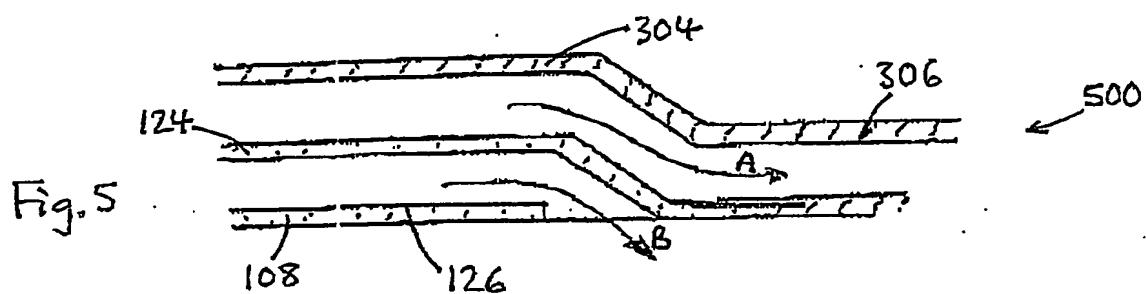
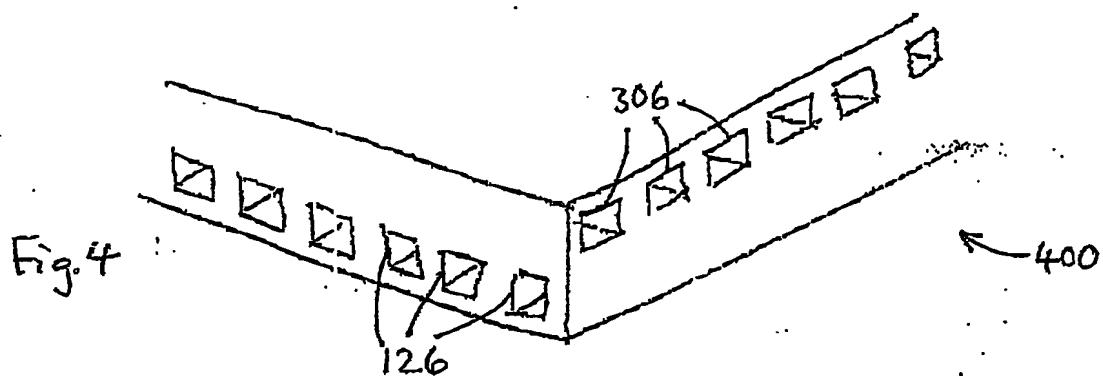
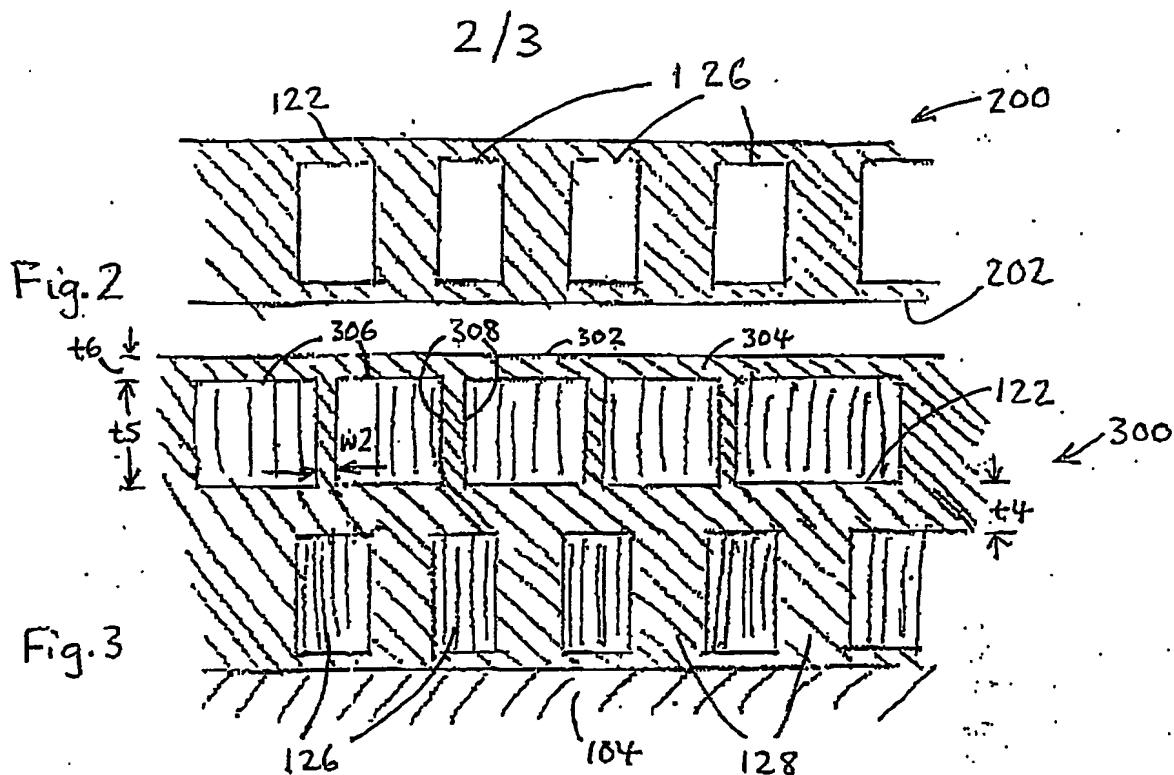
A process for the fabrication of a metallic component, such as those used in energy generation and heat transfer systems (e.g., reactor vessels, combustion chambers), in propulsion systems (e.g., rocket engines), and communications (e.g., optical telescopes). The process comprises: providing an object (e.g. a shaped mandrel) having surface; performing a first electroforming operation, thereby forming a first metallic layer comprising a metallic material (e.g. nickel, copper) on said surface; forming a first mask layer on the first metallic layer, the first mask layer comprising a non-conductive material (e.g. PMMA); patterning the first mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of first recesses in the first mask layer in which the non-conductive material above the first metallic layer is removed, said first recesses having a dimension of elongation; performing second electroforming operation using a metallic material whereby said first recesses are filled with said metallic material and a second metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a first predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said first mask layer. The process may include: forming a second mask layer on the upper surface of the second metallic layer, the second mask layer comprising a non-conductive material; patterning the second mask layer, thereby providing a plurality of second recesses in the second mask layer in which the non-conductive material above the second metallic layer is removed, said second recesses having a dimension of elongation; performing a third electroforming operation using said metallic material whereby said second recesses are filled with said metallic material and a third metallic layer is formed comprising said metallic material extending at least a second predetermined thickness above, and entirely or partially over the surface of, said mask layer. The non-conductive material and mandrel are removed, thus producing a component single or multiple layers of cooling or heat transfer channels, the channels in adjacent layers for example having directions at right angles.

(Fig. 1)

1/3

Fig. 1





3/3

Fig. 7

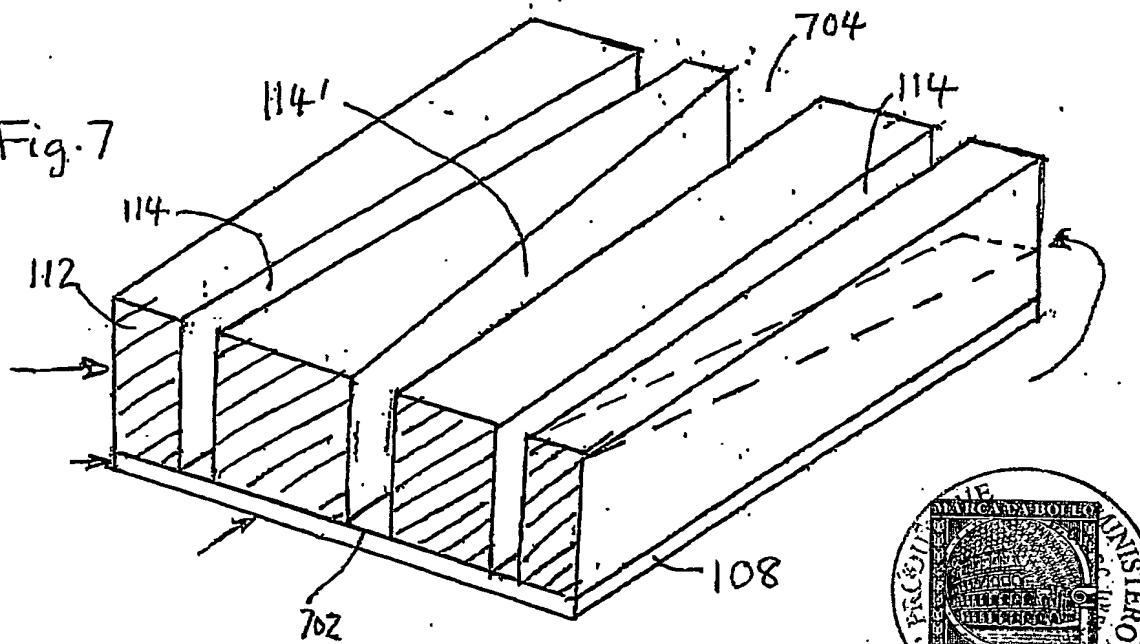
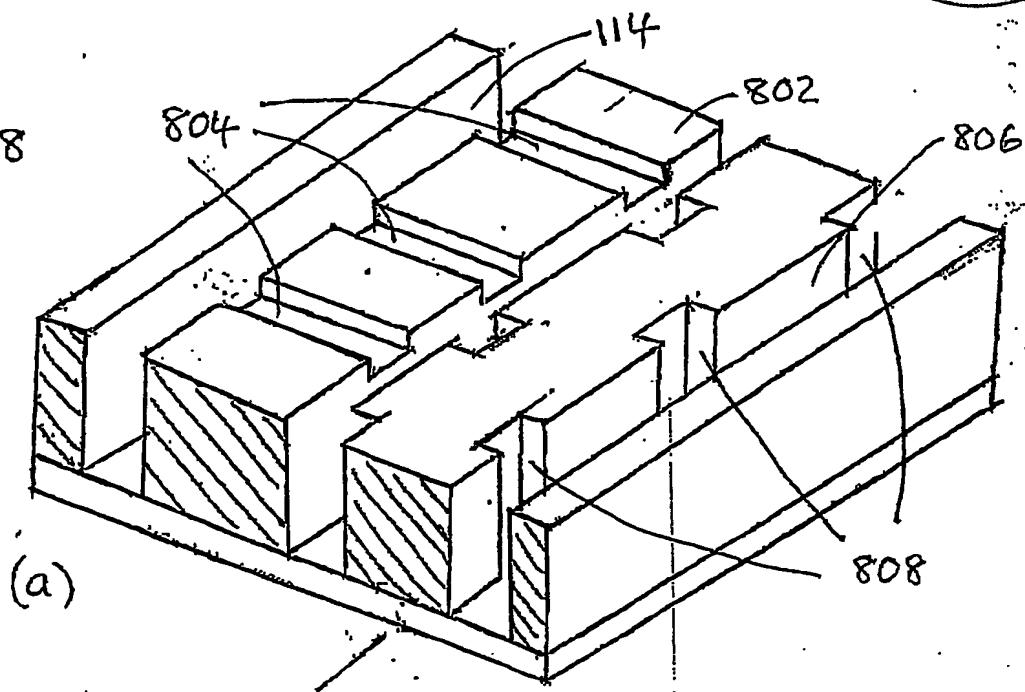
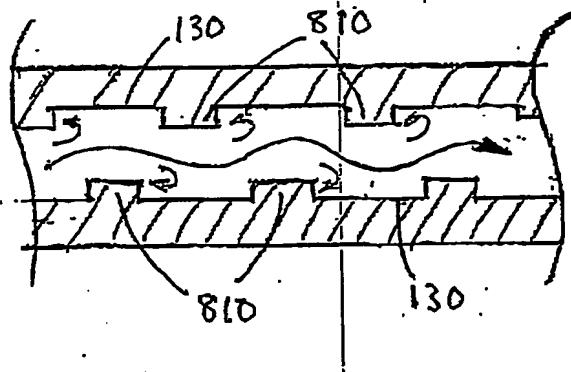


Fig. 8



(a)

(b)



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